



## CITY OF BAINBRIDGE ISLAND

### Letter to the Editor

As many already know, the Kitsap County Superior Court recently issued a ruling in a Public Records Act lawsuit brought last year by two Bainbridge Island citizens against the City and two current members of the City Council. The City has decided to ask the Court of Appeals to review the trial court's ruling. As the three members of the City Council who were not members of the Council last year, we thought it important to share our justification for supporting this decision.

This case began at a time last year when the emotions of a number of Bainbridge Islanders, both on and off the City Council, were high. To a casual observer it would have been clear that there was little trust and collegiality among some members of the Council, and there were a number of Island interest groups who had little faith in some members of the Council or indeed, in the Council and City government as a whole.

While the current Council from time to time has divergent views on what course of action is best for the City, its members have established cordial relations, are performing their jobs and conducting public business respectfully and productively. From all corners of the community the Council hears approval of our collective performance to-date.

We don't want to jeopardize this progress by involving ourselves in the details of this Public Records Act case. However, insofar as the trial court's ruling deals with the performance of City staff and the basis for legal liability of the City, we believe the court has made some clear mistakes and drawn some unfair and unwarranted conclusions. We believe these errors can be corrected only by having the Court of Appeals take a fresh look at this case.

In particular, we believe the facts demonstrate that the City's Public Records Officer acted professionally and in accordance with the requirements of the Public Records Act in her efforts to respond to the requests which preceded this case. We are comfortable with the decision that an appeal is necessary to correct the trial court's erroneous and unjustified conclusions to the contrary.

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